

Media and Information Literacy

Quarter 2 – Module 14: Manipulative Information and Media

This instructional material was collaboratively developed and reviewed by educators from public and private schools, colleges, and or/universities. We encourage teachers and other education stakeholders to email their feedback, comments, and recommendations to the Department of Education at action@deped.gov.ph.

We value your feedback and recommendations.

Lesson**1****Manipulative Information
and Media**

Have you ever read fake news? Or have you ever bought a product because your idol celebrity endorses it? Maybe, you have also experienced going to a shop and buying an item in a 'Buy One, Take One' promo? Companies use different strategies to attract consumers like us, leading us to eventually buy the products they produce. In this lesson, you will learn about the different types of manipulative information and media which can help you identify its reliability and validity based on its sources.



What is It

Manipulative Information and Media

In the previous activity, you decoded the important terms that you will encounter in this lesson. Here, you will be able to have a depth of understanding of **manipulative information and media**. This refers to the materials, programs, applications, and the like that we can use to formulate new information.

Dimensions of Manipulative Information and Media

A. Definition, Characteristics and Sources

Manipulate means to handle, manage, or influence something or someone skillfully. Although to manipulate may be used to create order, it can also be done unfairly which will only favor one side. Meanwhile, information is quite a broad term. Information can cover data, knowledge derived from different studies, experiences, or instructions and even signals or symbols.

Information sources can come from virtually anywhere. These are in the form of books, journals, magazines, and even through personal experiences expressed in blogs, videos, webpages, and many more. So, imagine just how information can be easily accessed by someone anytime and anywhere. We all know that one of the most influential users and moderators of information is the media.



<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/icon-social-networking-presentation-908163/>

The media world often uses information to describe knowledge of specific events or situations that has been collected or perceived through communication, intelligence, or news. Therefore, manipulative information is the type of information that can be handled, managed, or influenced by something or someone skillfully for the advantage or disadvantage of something or someone.

Nowadays, the term 'media' comes in many forms. Media is defined as the combination of physical objects used for communication or mass communication through physical objects (such as radio, television, computers, or film). It can also be the means of communication or a group of people working together in the field of radio and television broadcasting, newspapers, magazines, and/or the Internet, that reaches or influences people widely. Media, as it is supposed to be, are sources of credible information wherein contents are provided through an editorial process determined by journalistic values attributed to an organization or a legal person.

We know that the people's perception of reality can be shaped based on what they read, hear, or watch through the various media platforms and technologies. That is why some firms use media manipulation to satisfy their clients.

Media manipulation is the strategy used by advertising or marketing firms to manipulate information in favor of a client who wants to promote their product or service. Through media manipulation, a firm can create an image or argument which will favor their client using propaganda techniques and suppression of information which can widely influence the people.

Various research agreed that TV advertisements have a positive influence on the consumer's buying behavior. So, some firms use manipulative information to convince the consumers to buy the product of their client. Some of these firms are:

1. **Marketing firm or Ad Agency.** They generate sales of goods and services and directly contribute to the company's profitability. They usually offer services like creating, planning, and handling different forms of advertisements to promote their clients and their clients' products and services.
2. **Public Relations (PR) firm.** They coordinate relationships through the media with various publicities in order to gain public acceptance and approval of the client's activities, including its sales activities. They intend to change the public's action by influencing their opinions.

B. FORMAT AND TYPES

Manipulative information and media can be formally and informally produced, organized, and disseminated through different types and formats. To better understand how advertising and public relations firms manipulate information, we must understand the perspective of a viewer and/or a consumer.

Recall the times you have watched a TV commercial and became persuaded to buy a certain product, and/or the times you believed in fake news found on the internet. Those are examples of media manipulation. The following are the different kinds of media manipulation:

1. Consumer confusion

Description: Consumer confusion is the state of mind of the consumers during purchasing products that leads them to having lack of confidence towards their purchasing decision. This can even lead to incorrect purchasing decisions. This is a result of having too many of the same products in the market. Some sellers become creative with their packaging so it stands out. Meanwhile, some try to attract the consumers with different kinds of promotions which confuses the customers.

Example: In a grocery store, there are various promotions for each kind of product between the two different brands. Usually, consumers are confused as to which one they should

- ❖ Two brands of detergent:
'Buy One, Take One' or 'Buy One, Get One Free'
- ❖ Two brands of shampoo:
'Buy 10 plus 1' or 'Buy 10 plus free mug' promo



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/loopzilla/8176075111>

2. Crowd manipulation

Description: Crowd manipulation is the intentional use of principles and techniques of crowd psychology. This is used by advertising firms to engage, control, and/or influence the desires of the consumers to make them believe that there is a great demand for the product being advertised.

Example strategies used by advertising firms for crowd manipulation:

- ❖ Hired random people would attest to the efficacy of the product.
- ❖ False survey results or testimonies to convince the consumers the benefits of the product.

3. Propaganda

Description: It is the information or idea that an advertising firm can release using different forms of media which can help the image of their client and adversely affect the image of its opponent.

Example:

- ❖ Showing the charity work done by the client while exposing the opponent's slush funds.

4. Gatekeeping

Description: Gatekeeping is the type of manipulation where information is being filtered for dissemination (whether for publication, broadcasting, the Internet, or some other mode of communication). The public is informed with only a portion of the truth for different kinds of purposes.

Example:

- ❖ During a gas leak accident in a condominium, only few casualties are mentioned to protect the owner of the condominium.
- ❖ During a terrorist attack, the strategy of the soldiers to rescue the hostages are not disclosed to the public for security and protection purposes.

5. Celebrity endorsements

Description: This is the use of celebrities as endorsers of a certain product or services who will attest to its effectiveness and good quality.

Example:

- ❖ Kris Aquino, "The Queen of all Media", was named top celebrity endorser by YES! Magazine because of her credibility and gift of gab. She endorses a lot of products and services which includes brands of bakeshop, textiles, juices, canned goods, shampoo, telecom, feminine wash and many more.

6. Hoax

Description: This is use of manipulative information which intends to deceive or defraud the public.

Example:

- ❖ In 2015, Peter Onneken and Diana Löbl, a pair of documentary filmmakers from Germany, and John Bohannon, a biologist and science journalist based at Harvard, tricked millions of people into believing chocolate could help them lose weight.

(source: https://www.cjr.org/analysis/the_history_behind_the_chocolate_hoax.php)

7. Psychological manipulation

Description: This is used by advertising agencies which aim to influence and affect the public's belief, emotions, motives and/or reasoning towards a certain product, service, or situation.

Example:

- ❖ An advertising agency highlights the slimming components of a juice product thus creating a higher demand for that product with slimming components and the premise that being slim is better.

8. Fear mongering or scaremongering

Description: It is the dissemination of frightening and exaggerated rumors of an imminent danger or the tactic of purposely and needlessly aiming to instill fear to the public.

Example:

- ❖ If the news exaggerated that the power of Abu Sayyaf penetrated Luzon and risks planting bombs in malls, there would be a decline of people going to malls and ~~even~~ other public places.

C. Advantages and Limitations

Advantages of Manipulative Information

- ❖ It can boost the image of a person, product, or services.
- ❖ It can filter the information that would be disseminated to the public.
- ❖ It can provide a sense of control and order when it comes to the kind and amount of information to be publicized.

Limitations of Manipulative Information

- ❖ It can be biased and/or subjective to protect the image of a person, product, or services.
- ❖ It can mislead the facts and conceal sensitive issues.
- ❖ It can hide the truth that the public has the rights to know.

D. Value of Manipulative Information and Media

To manipulate is an action that immediately connotes something negative, but what have you acquired during the lessons? Should we classify all manipulative information as negative and/or harmful? Can people still benefit from manipulative information?

At this moment, you should be able to use some selection criteria to evaluate the reliability and validity of manipulative information and media and its sources. You can identify whether a manipulative data is good or bad based on:

1. Motive or purpose.

Description: It is important to identify the cause or the purpose why a particular group employed it.

Example:

- A general infomercial was released to inform the public regarding disaster-preparedness in case a disaster like flood or earthquake happens. (Good motive or purpose)
- A TV commercial was released to create a good image to a political candidate and to convince the public to vote for them even if they do not have the integrity and good intentions to run for position. (Bad motive or purpose)

2. Degree of influence or impact.

Description: It is the extent on how the manipulation of information can produce effects on the actions, behavior and/or opinions of the public. Some advertising and public relations firms engage in manipulation to increase the degree of influence or impact to the public.

Example:

- If the general infomercial released for disaster preparedness is misinterpreted, the public might panic which will produce a negative impact despite the good motive or purpose.
- Some commercials, like those involving cigarettes and liquor, can influence people to consume things that could be potentially dangerous to their health. It can also influence young people to try it too.